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# Baker-Polito Administration Announces Funding to Support the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership

Grant Funding Awarded to Ten Municipalities, One Regional Planning Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2/14/2020

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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**BOSTON** — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced \$260,000 in grant funding to support forest stewardship, nature-based tourism and climate education to ten municipalities and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments through the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership Grant Program. This funding builds upon the Commonwealth's recent [Shared Stewardship Agreement](#) (</news/baker-polito-administration-and-usda-forest-service-sign-stewardship-agreement-to-support>) with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, which established a framework under which local governments and other stakeholders will work together to advance the goals of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) to conserve forests and enhance economic development in the region.

“Improving the stewardship of our forests makes them more resilient to the impacts of climate change, strengthens local economies by encouraging nature-based tourism, and benefits rural communities,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “These grants are a terrific example of the collaborative spirit we’ve worked to foster here in the Commonwealth, and we are proud to partner with these communities to preserve our forests and natural resources for generations to come.”

“Collaboration between our state agencies and municipalities is crucial to achieving our shared climate goals, and the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership is a model for how different entities can come together to care for our forests and protect vital assets for rural economies,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “Through the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership Grant Program, small towns are better able to leverage a dedicated network of volunteers to make significant improvements to our forests and trail networks.”

The Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership Grant Program - a new program offering opportunities for communities in the region to realize the objectives of the MTWP - provides funding to assist towns in the Commonwealth's most rural and forested region to plan for the care of forests in the face of climate change, prepare forest offset projects,

and improve nature-based tourism through connected trail networks and educational exhibits.

“Healthy, resilient forests are critical ecosystems that help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet our ambitious climate goals,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides**. “Building on the Baker-Polito Administration’s leadership in supporting our rural communities, we are pleased to work together with these municipalities to protect and improve upon these vital natural resources.”

The following municipalities and regional planning committees were awarded grant funding:

APPLICANT	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	GRANT AWARD
Adams	Greylock Glen Environmental Education and Natural Resource-Based Tourism	The project will expand the partnership among the town, MassAudubon, the MA College of Liberal Arts and Williams College to design the exhibit space for the Greylock Glen Education Center to focus on forests and climate change.	\$20,000
Ashfield	Sanderson Elementary School Loop Trail	The project will design and build a 1.5- mile loop trail from the Town’s elementary school through a diverse, town forest and include educational kiosks and brochures for school children, town residents and the visiting public.	\$20,000
Conway	Town Forest Stewardship Plans	The project will complete an inventory, assessment and plan for two town forests, including education of and collaboration with town residents in regard to forest stewardship,	\$20,000

which is especially important as forests face the impacts of climate change.

Heath	Burnt Hill – Catamount Trail Development	The project will design and build a new trail and picnic area connecting the 350-acre town forest to the 1,300-acre state forest to the benefit of both town residents and visitors. The project will benefit from many hours of local volunteers and produce forest stewardship educational kiosks.	\$20,000
New Ashford	Trail Renovation and Forest Stewardship	The project will complete forest stewardship plans on town forests and focus trail repair work on important trails for access by hikers, snowmobilers and hunters.	\$20,000
North Adams	City Trail Mapping Project	The project will compile a comprehensive map of all the trails on various ownerships in the city and produce and market the trail map to connect both tourists and residents with the outdoors.	\$20,000
Peru	Improved Access to Hiking Trails and Attractions	The project will rehabilitate a section of Curtin Road and install wayfinding signage from Route 143 so the public can access Peru State Forest and hiking trails to Garnet Peak and a cultural site.	\$20,000
Rowe	Outreach and Stewardship Plan for the Town Forest	The project will gather input from meetings and a survey about the management of the 1,408-acre town park and forest and complete an assessment and plan for the property that will improve the climate resilience of the forest.	\$20,000

Shelburne	Mahican-Mohawk Trail Village Connection	The project will design and construct a trail from Shelburne Falls village to this 100-mile regional trail along the Deerfield River that will connect the Connecticut River to the Hudson River and include trail signage and kiosks.	\$20,000
Williamstown	Forest Assessment for a Forest Carbon Offset Project	The project will complete an inventory and assessment of 1,800 acres of town forest land in several separate parcels and include public outreach with the community to agree on next steps for this project.	\$20,000
Franklin Regional Council of Governments	Regional Tourism Assessment	The project will inventory and map the nature-based tourism infrastructure in the 21 town MTWP region (outdoor recreation trails and sites, information centers, parking areas, etc.) and prepare recommendations for tourism infrastructure that is needed to expand regional nature-based tourism.	\$60,000

Initiated in 2013, the MTWP is a collaboration among the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Franklin Land Trust, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, a Forest Service Liaison, and the MTWP Advisory Committee, which has representation from each of the 21 communities in the region as well as regional non-profits.

In late 2018, state legislation authorizing the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership was signed into law. Of the 21 communities eligible to join the partnership, 14 communities are now members, while seven more will vote on whether to join the partnership in the coming months. The Shared Stewardship Framework is an important step in the

transition from a locally led vision to a long-term initiative and national model program to conserve and steward the forests, support rural economic development, and strengthen the vitality of these small communities.

Earlier this month, the Baker-Polito Administration [awarded the Adams and the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership a \\$1.5 million grant](#)

[\(/news/baker-polito-administration-awards-116-million-in-climate-change-funding-to-cities-and-towns\)](#) to support a regional adaptation climate resilience project through the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program. The grant was part of \$11.6 million in grant funding to over 80 communities across the Commonwealth to identify climate hazards, develop strategies to improve resilience, and implement priority actions to adapt to climate change.

“The investment awarded to towns in my district through this grant program is a great step forward in showcasing the natural beauty of western Mass, while providing opportunities for economic development through promoting and conserving our natural resources,” **said State Senator Adam Hinds (D-Pittsfield)**. “It remains important for the communities to come together to define an agreed path forward for the partnership and I look forward to engagement on this.”

“I would like to thank the Baker Administration and Secretary Theoharides in awarding four important environmental grants to communities of the First Berkshire District,” **said State Representative John Barrett III (D-North Adams)**. “These grant funds will benefit the nature-based economy of the region, as well as address the critical climate change issues we are facing in Northern Berkshire.”

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